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RECOLLECTIONS OF A SEXAGENARIAN.

HEALTH is undoubtedly the greatest of all earthly blessings, as, without at least some measure of it, no other blessing can be enjoyed. Yet there are certain limitations to this statement, which are not generally taken into account. After one has been subjected to severe, and, it may be, dangerous indisposition, and the nervous system in particular has been relaxed and shattered, it is often exceedingly delightful gradually to convalesce, to enjoy anew the renovating and refreshing breath of heaven, and to feel the loosened and weakened nerves almost imperceptibly acquiring tone and tension, holding on an equable course towards a confirmed recovery. This state of feeling is perhaps superior in its capabilities of enjoyment even to robust and perfect health and vigour. It is thus that we in a manner live over again the earlier stages of our being—those stages when infancy is passing into youth, and that again into manhood. With all the experience of years, and, it may be, of age, we enter anew upon a progressive state; and the heart lightens, and the pulse beats softly, under such circumstances. The writer of these observations has experienced more than once this very pleasing rejuvenescence, and on a recent occasion in particular, his attainment, namely, of his grand climacteric. Weak, and incapable of enduring noise, or of exercising his eyes in reading, he was impelled, or rather naturally had recourse to reflection and meditation, to prevent tedium or ennui; and the similarity betwixt the youth of sixty-three and the youth of thirteen, struck him forcibly. The one state seemed in many respects to bear a close analogy to the other; the same rejoicing feeling and lightness of spirit; the same freshening and glowing of surrounding nature; the same inward buoyancy, which expanded into friendly outgoings of heart towards all that was kindred and kindly around. In fact, he became "a child of larger growth," and around his pillow there clustered the many-coloured and circumstanced events and objects of his boyish years. "It was a midsummer night's dream," over which was poured a bright and vivid radiance, bringing out into strong relief the world as it appeared to and was appreciated by him fifty years ago.

And truly the last fifty years have effected a wonderful change on the face both of society and of the landscape around us. Centuries had rolled on, and man, in habits and improvements, remained comparatively in the same circumstances in which he had continued for centuries before. But a change came. Like the sleeping beauty of nursery notoriety, man awoke into energetic life. A person, accordingly, who has attained his sixty-third year, has witnessed two distinct states of things; a prior and a posterior, an unprogressive and a progressive, a rude and a civilised, an age characterised by bodily labour, and another by mental application. But if, as is the case with thousands, as well as with the writer of these sketches, this individual has spent his early years in humble life, from which, by the application of his talents, or under favour of fortunate incidents, he has, in the course of fifty years, ascended, as it were, into a different sphere or station in society; if the poor bare-headed boy has become an East India colonel, a magistrate, or a wealthy citizen, then the contrast betwixt the past and the present is infinitely increased; and the reviewing of things as they were is doubly interesting. I can still dwell with inexpressible delight, particularly under the circumstances which I have endeavoured to describe, on the humble cottage where I first drew breath; on the clear and transparent pool in which I performed my morning

ablutions, not without some curious observations made on the little fish which lay snugly couched, but not concealed, by the side of a stone, or under covert of the projecting bank; and on all the other features of the simple rural scene, to which the eyes of my conscious being were first awakened. I can feel as if my steps were at this moment on the mountain side, on a fishing excursion. The early mist has ascended from the vale, over which, during the night, it had slept in calm repose, and is now breaking away into a darkening canopy overhead. The soft and silky smoke steals in winding ascent from cottage and steading; the responsive crow of the cock comes joyous upon the ear; and the flocks repair to pasturage on their mountain tracts. Yet I verily believe that, at the time when I actually beheld all this romance, as it were, of nature, I was comparatively insensible to any very deep or pleasurable impression. "It is the sunset of life" which has cast a bright reflective radiance over its morn, and has called forth into legible character these invisible traces which nature had early imprinted.

Of all those vivid and varied images which now float in sunny softness around my pillow, the most delightful are those connected with the little plot devoted to useful and ornamental plants at the end of our cottage. The garden was an appendage of the utmost importance—a thing, without which a cottage could not have been a complete and proper cottage, or cottage-life half so endurable a life as I can assure my readers it was. The fireside was a holy place, from the devotions which there took place; but, overlooking this only, the garden was associated with all that was elevated, or beautiful, or poetical in the poor man's lot. No formal walls of any kind shut up this pleasant spot; but it lay at the end of the house, exposed to the sun and to the passenger's eye alike, with only a rude hedge fortified by a low turf-wall around it. The *utile*, I am bound to confess—but I do not confess it with a grudge—considerably exceeded the *dulce*. A monstrous deal of the space was allotted to common pot-herbs; including, first, the honest-like cabbage; second, the more dwarfish curlies; and, not omitting syboes, leeks and carrots. Potatoes were then less generally cultivated; but yet there rarely were wanting a few beds, a portion of which were *carries*, forming, in the first days of June, a treat which many city families of greater consequence could not command. In its proper season, too, might be seen a row of white peas, tall and luxuriant, side by side with two or three equally thriving ranks of beans. A few gooseberry and hindberry (rasp) bushes might be said to form a connecting link between these useful commodities, so approvable by all thrifty housewives, and those productions which were only designed to gratify the eye or scent. In some peculiarly sheltered spot might be seen the cotter's flower-garden; nor let any dainty disciple of Mr Linley or Mr Loudon of the present day smile at the things of humble name which composed it. There was the Sweet William in its own appropriate corner, beloved not less for its modest simplicity than for its supposed connexion with the affecting ballad of William and Margaret. Near by, smiled in virgin loveliness the *None-so-pretty*, always pronounced amongst us, as if in honour of some village maiden of superior beauty, the *Nansy Prêty*. The daisy raised her silver star, and spread her many petals to the sun, or wisped them up to the shower. Sometimes there might even be seen a lack-a-daisical lily or two, or a couple of tulips loling out their tongues at all the passers-by. But, whether owing to the plain and somewhat severe character of my countrymen, I cannot tell, smelling

plants were more plentiful than flowers. Rue and thyme were invariably present, indispensable for the sake of the moral pun connected with their names. Spearmint, so homely in its appearance, but so powerfully fragrant, and southern-wood, only a degree less plain or less odoriferous, were inseparable companions, never absent from this rustic scene. To thousands of Scotsmen, wandering over the world, these words will be felt as associated with their religious feelings, and this, because a bunch of them was an unfailing accompaniment of the cottage party to church, to be placed in a corner of the book-board for the general benefit, while each bible and psalm-book was made a sort of *hortus siccus* for their detached leaves and sprigs, half for the regalement of the sense, and half as a humble tribute of regard for the sacred volume. There was another plant, not valued for either flower or scent, but for its curious appearance, which was an almost certain tenant of the cottager's garden. This was the Gardener's Garters. I think our meditative peasantry liked it for the illustration it so peculiarly gave of the endless power of the God of nature, for carefully was each urchin called to observe that not any two blades were striped exactly alike; and invariably was the not unreasonable doctrine impressed, that never had there been perfect matches in the blades of the plant since the beginning of time, nor would there be till its end.

"There grew a bonny brier-bush in our kail-yard,"

as in all others, offering the rose in that simple primitive form which it bears in the ancient copies of England's beautiful emblem, and from which it has in latter ages been so outrageously "cultivated." What a delight to the scent, and what a beautiful object to the eye, was this plant in full flower! yet even here our thoughtful Caledonian peasant could find a grave moral. The nearness of the thorn to the flower was always pointed out. In the enclosure, the saugh, with its "siller buds," the rowan-tree, with its Moorish dusky elegance of form, and its late but magnificent fruit, towered over the tangle of bramble and hawthorn; while one corner was distinguished by a solitary ash, wherein, year after year, a pyot built her nest; and another by the less stately elder, from which, however, there was an unfailing supply of "bullet guns," a species of wooden ordnance much in favour with me, and sadly destructive of the peace of many a cottage community. Let me not overlook, as one constant and conspicuous feature of the scene, the one or two *bees'-skeps*, placed in some sun-looking beild, and often all music and bustle with their myriad tenantry, visitant of all the bloomy moors and flowery braes within ten miles.

It was in this blessed Sabbath seclusion, the cottage-garden, that I received the earliest impressions of piety. Being a fatherless child from my infancy, and having no home-associate besides my dear mother and two aged grand-aunts, my earliest education was purely feminine. I was instructed by them in the art of bible reading, and in pouring out my soul in prayer and supplication at the footstool of divine mercy. The temple of our worship was a secluded and over-shadowed bower, half occupied by the tiger lily, and hindberry bush. How often, amidst the struggles, temptations, and deviations of my future life, has the idea of this sweet and hallowed seclusion recurred to me, placing in strong and reproachful relief the backslidings and forgetfulness of after years! I have seen the child sleeping in the sweetest and deepest repose on its mother's bosom, and I have seen the posthumous aspect of the departed mother. Oh, how beautifully

similar are these two separate yet seemingly identical states! For nothing but the aspect of the child sleeping on the breast can in any degree portray the still, holy, and heavenly repose which dwells upon the countenance of the recently departed. (My heart, be thou still; there are images which surround these recollections of too private and personal a nature to be made known to any one.) And thus do I feel now, when life's vain tumults are comparatively past—when the passions either rage no more, or are all but subdued—when I have neared the harbour of everlasting rest—that my soul returns by the law of assimilation to its early state of quietude and devotional peace.

The cottage-garden experienced, like its betters, the interesting varieties resulting from the succession of seasons. In spring, how delightful to watch the awakened germ as it swells into leaf, and flower, and fruit! In summer, the boom of the black clock, the buzz of the bee, and the sharp tinkling note of the grasshopper, are peculiarly soothing in a shaded corner of the poor man's paradise. In harvest, there are delicious roots to pull from the earth, and to roast in a sly corner, whilst Robin Redbreast hops, and the falling leaf wavers around. In winter, even in the dreary days of winter, the cottage-garden is not without its interest. It is at this season that the poor famishing hare leaves her seat midst the upland bent, and ventures at midnight hour to snatch a scanty morsel from the tops of the cabbage plant, whilst the earth lies covered, deep and wide, with a mantle of snow. I see her still, as she cautiously descends under a clear sky and a full moon, from the mountain side. There she sits; or is it only a tuft projecting through the smooth and crispy snow! Now she moves, and my doubts have vanished. She nears, and nears; and I can detect, even at this distance, her long ears and "eyes upraised to take the horizon in." But the barking of the cottage cur has scared her, and she is off at full speed to her upland retreat. When all is again still, she renews her cautious and watchful advances; and under favour of a sleeping dog and a reposing family, she ventures at last through the hedge into the cottage-garden. There she couches. You may see her ears alternately elevated and depressed behind that cabbage plant; her little nibblings are perceptible, as, with nostril extended and teeth projecting, she snips inch after inch from the extremity of the blades. Crack goes a gun, and in an instant poor Malkin tumbles over, sprawling, and deadly wounded. She has been shot from an ambush, by one who had been lurking for hours to accomplish his purpose. Oh for a Burns to execrate the miscreant in suitable and imperishable terms; and yet at the time when such incidents as these took place, I actually exulted in such atrocities.

But there were other scenes than these to which this blessed garden spot was privy. Here it was that, while yet a stripling of sixteen years of age, immediately before my leaving school, and taking my plunge into the boisterous ocean of life, I first felt the exquisite kindlings of that master sentiment, which, when awakened in such situations, and under such hallowing circumstances, purifies whilst it warms, and animates whilst it totally possesses the heart. Nancy Morrison was a mountain child. She, too, was fatherless, and her mother was our nearest neighbour. We often met in the woods which separated our dwellings, and shared in the delights of bird-nesting, nutting, and shoe-gathering. We had known each other from the first dawn of reason, and our years were nearly equal, Nancy being only my junior half a year. We had both of us reached our fifteenth summer, ere we discovered that we were desperately in love. This discovery was made in the following manner—the scene is phototyped in my memory:—During one of our summer noon excursions, Nancy set her bare foot upon an adder, and the reptile was in the act of twisting its head from beneath her tread. I saw and immediately comprehended the danger; and, catching the twisted serpent by one of its convolutions, I threw it to a distance, not, however, before it had bit my finger. In a little time the part began to swell, and became exceedingly painful. Nancy shed tears in floods, with which she actually bathed my hand. Whilst her head was upon my breast, and the dew of sympathy on her cheek, I stole the first kiss of love. But the swelling spread, meanwhile, from finger to wrist, and from wrist to elbow. The matter became serious; and it was not till after many fomentations with chicken-wood, and other garden applications, that a cure was slowly effected. Meanwhile, the berries ripened in our cottage-garden, and Nancy was invited to share them. There, under that mountain ash, which, in all its scarlet fruitage, still blossoms in my view, did we sit for hours, sinless and sorrowless, absorbing from the very atmosphere the bliss of universal life. Love, indeed, was never on our lips, but it was nestled snug and warm in our hearts. We neither read, nor raved, nor spouted: our hearts' desire was to be together, and to look into each other's eyes.

But the dream was of short duration. A wandering gipsy, with a child dying of the small-pox, found her way into the cottage which Nancy called her home. The poor widow, her mother, had not the heart, under such circumstances, to deny her shelter. The gipsy's child died, and in fourteen days afterwards Nancy was in her grave, and I narrowly missed the same fate; for nothing could keep me from visiting

my first, my truest love. She was insensible to objects present to her, but the past became present. Oh, how she spoke of myself, and of our appointments! "We were to meet in an hour—I must be up," said she, "and away!" and force alone kept her from rising. My visitation was less severe, but I bear the marks of it on my person to this hour.

The cottage-garden now appears to me, on recollection, to have been a most important feature in both the economical and moral condition of the poor man. It contributed to the support of his family, and the pleasurable duty of attending to it gave an occupation to his mind which could not but tend to make him a happier and better man. I am afraid that, amongst the rural labouring class, it is a blessing now much more sparsely sown than it was. The cow and the garden are now comforts which subsist only in the Arcadian or poetical idea of the Scottish farm-servant, not in reality; for even these new modes have been introduced, and the amount of "production" is the main thing held in view. As for the other labouring class, whose days are spent in factories and workshops, and their evenings in a squalid home, perhaps in the fourth floor of a narrow house in a crowded street, and in the centre of a dense city, how remote is his state from all connexion with external nature whatsoever, need not be declared. These changes are perhaps less deplorable than many represent them to be, and they have certainly accompanied a national advance of the most extraordinary kind. But still, my early feelings will rise upon me, and I cannot help wishing that more of our labouring population were provided with such gardens as I have known in days of yore.

SKETCHES IN NATURAL HISTORY.

LUMINOUS INSECTS.

THE power of generating and emitting light is one of the most remarkable properties which have been conferred on animals. It is a very small proportion of them, indeed, that are so singularly endowed, and these all belong to tribes which occupy the lower positions in the zoological scale. No quadruped or bird is luminous in the smallest degree; and in the case of such fishes as have appeared to exhibit the phenomenon, it will in general be found, that it must be ascribed to the reflection of the light from their resplendent scales, or their movements in the water exciting the phosphorescence of minute animals of a different class, and thus surrounding them with a kind of halo, rather than to any inherent luminous qualities of their own. The minute animals alluded to are chiefly Annelides, Molluscs, and Radiaria, which literally fill the waters of many tropical seas, sometimes forming a luminous crest on the waves when the waters are agitated, and causing any moving object to be followed by a track of light. Some kinds of Myriapod animals, also, which live upon land, such as the scolopendra, occasionally exhibit a faint luminosity, which seems to be closely connected with certain electrical properties. These animals are nearly related to insects; but it is among insects, properly so called, that we find the most striking examples of this interesting phenomenon. In these, alone, do we perceive a peculiar apparatus for elaborating the matter from which the light emanates; a special provision for allowing it to be shed abroad from the internal reservoir; and, as the result of these arrangements, a continuous and powerful effulgence, greatly more conspicuous than in any other luminous animal, and which has always excited great attention and interest in all who take pleasure in observing natural appearances.

But although this property exists in the highest degree in insects, it is confined to a very limited number of them. Three groups, or families, comprehend all that are very remarkable in this respect, and two of these groups are exotic. The most conspicuous is a tribe of beetles named Elateridae, of which we have many non-luminous representatives in this country; but the shining species are confined to America. The Lampyridæ, or glow-worms, are pretty generally distributed over the globe; and although most plentiful and of largest size in warm countries, some of them can exist in our humid and variable climate. The other luminous tribe, the Fulgoridæ, consisting of large brightly-coloured four-winged flies, are common to the tropical regions of both the Old World and the New.

The first-mentioned of these groups is denominated Pyrophorus, or fire-bearers, and the species are known by the name of fire-flies. Upwards of thirty have been named and described, varying much in size, and in the degree of their luminosity. They occur on the American continent, ranging from Chili to the United States, but avoiding the colder regions, and being by far most plentiful in the torrid zone. In shape they are comparatively narrow and elongated, the thorax, or segment of the body behind the head, terminating at the posterior angles in a strong spine; and there is another spine on the under-side of the breast, directed backwards, and moving in a groove in the anterior part of the abdomen: by the united operation of these elastic spines, the insects can spring into the air when they happen to fall on their backs, and recover their natural walking position. Their colours are invariably obscure, generally dusky-black or dark-brown. The most common and best known (*P. scottica*), which may serve as an example of the whole, is upwards of an inch long, and one-third of an

inch broad. On each side of the thorax, a little in advance of the hinder angle, there is a pretty large rounded spot, which appears of a pale-yellow colour after the death of the animal. When alive, these spots are clear and transparent, and form two outlets through which the light is displayed. Each of them has a reservoir of luminous matter immediately beneath it, and they may be called the front-lights, which, by shedding their radiance obliquely forward, enable the insect to steer its way in the darkness. A third and more considerable reservoir is placed in the hinder and lower part of the thorax, in a kind of triangular cavity, from which the light does not radiate through any particular aperture, but is diffused in a kind of luminous nebula. When the insect walks or is at rest, the principal light is emitted by the two anterior reservoirs, and as it escapes by a narrow opening, it assumes somewhat of the form of a ray; but when the wings and their opaque wing-cases are expanded in the act of flight, the other reservoir sends forth a much more considerable volume of light, diffused equally on all sides, and, appearing to fill the whole cavity of the abdomen, displays itself through the integuments and joinings of the segments, like the light from a lantern made of horn or obscured glass. The fire-flies continue in an inactive state during the day, concealed under the bark, leaves of trees, and such-like places. The season of their activity commences with the twilight, and by the time the darkness is fully confirmed, they are all in motion. Their lights are seen moving about the dark recesses of the forest, or flitting from tree to tree; and in those parts of the country where they are plentiful, when the underwood is disturbed, they rise suddenly into the air in numbers, and spangle it as with a multitude of tiny stars.

Now motionless and dark, eluding search,
Self-shrouded; and anon, starting the sky,
Rise like a shower of fire.

In these insects, both sexes are luminous, and their light resembles that of the glow-worm, being of a greenish-white colour. That of a single individual is quite sufficient to enable one to read the smallest print in the darkest night, by moving the insect along the lines. When several are confined together, the luminosity is of course more considerable, and is made available by the natives for many useful purposes. Enclosed in a small cage of net-work, they form a kind of substitute for a lamp. When travelling in the night, the Indians are said to tie a number of them at times to their feet, by which they are enabled to choose their footing more securely; and it is easy to suppose many other cases in which their light may be turned to advantage.

The interest felt by Europeans on first visiting the western hemisphere, in a phenomenon so far transcending anything of the same kind witnessed here, has induced them, on several occasions, to try the experiment of introducing the fire-fly into this country. Mr Lees succeeded in bringing some over from the West Indies, by keeping them in a cage supplied with damp moss, and feeding them with sugar-cane, and when that was exhausted, with brown sugar; by these means he kept them alive for upwards of a quarter of a year, and is of opinion that, if brought over early in the season, they would live through a warm summer in this climate. "I do not despair, therefore," he adds, "of seeing our fair countrywomen at home, as well as abroad, employing these living gems to add to the splendour of their attire. At the Havannah, they are collected and sold for ornamenting the ladies' head-dresses at evening parties, when they are generally confined under gauze which covers the head, and from among the ringlets of hair these terrestrial stars shine forth with all their beauty." One of them had once the fortune to be accidentally transported to Paris under the form of a nymph or larva, and making its escape into the streets after assuming the perfect form, caused no small alarm and astonishment to the inhabitants of the Faubourg St Antoine, who could form no conjecture as to the nature of such an extraordinary phenomenon.

The Fulgoridæ, or lantern flies, are much larger and more conspicuous species than the fire-flies, and, like the latter, they are all extra-European. The most remarkable one is the great lantern-fly of South America, an insect about the size of a small bird, with four large membranous wings curiously marked and reticulated, the under pair having each a large eye-like spot near the extremity. The snout is singularly constructed, being very much lengthened and inflated, forming a large hollow box, in shape not unlike a bishop's mitre. This appendage is the lantern, and when the insect displays its radiance, it appears filled with phosphorescent light, which diffuses itself through the semi-transparent walls. In the lantern-flies of the Old World, of which the common Chinese species (*Fulgora Candalaria*) may be cited as an example, the snout is still further lengthened, but it is gradually narrowed to the tip, when it is not unfrequently curved upwards, and fantastically beset with knobs and spines. The older naturalists seem never to have entertained the least doubt regarding the luminosity of these insects, and hence all the names by which they are known, in different languages, have a reference to that property. Several travellers, also, give a circumstantial account of their luminous appearance; in particular, Madam Merian, who had confined several of the fulgora lanternaria in a box, and was alarmed, upon opening it in the dark, to find them sending forth a strong light.

But recent travellers in South America invariably affirm that they never saw them shining, although Richard, the celebrated botanist, reared specimens from the larva, and kept them by him during their whole life. The same difference of opinion on this point seems to prevail among the natives; for, on being questioned, some deny the fact, and others affirm it. These discrepancies can only be reconciled by supposing that these insects are luminous only on rare and special occasions, a certain combination of circumstances being requisite to render them so. It may be that only one of the sexes is luminous; and even in the sex so endowed, the manifestation of this property may depend on the age of the individual, the season of the year, the state of the weather, and many other contingencies.

The glow-worms are by far the best known of luminous insects, for they have a very wide range of distribution, and are also very numerous in species. Those of tropical countries attain a large size, although they never in this respect approach the other two groups already noticed; and as in these regions both sexes are winged and equally luminous, and they occur in great quantities, they often exhibit a very brilliant spectacle to the inhabitants. Several different kinds are found in Europe, but of these by far the most interesting are the common glow-worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*), and the Italian glow-worm (*L. Italica*), of each of which we shall therefore give some account.

The former is the only one that extends to this country, and even here it is locally distributed, occurring chiefly in the more southern of the English counties, and seldom in great profusion. We have not been able to ascertain exactly how far it comes northwards in any considerable quantity; probably not beyond the central counties, or about the 53d degree of latitude. Straggling individuals, however, and even occasional colonies, are found in Scotland, although of late years they seem to have been gradually becoming more rare. We have heard of many localities, even as far north as Perthshire, where we should now search for it in vain. The female, as is well-known, is wingless, and it is in that sex the luminous property chiefly resides. She is a feeble and inactive animal, little given to locomotion, frequenting hedge-banks and meadow-lands, where the herbage is usually somewhat moist. Her depressed vermiform body, divided into rings, which are uncovered by either wings or wing-cases, together with her slow reptant motions, have no doubt suggested the appellation *worm*, although with the animals properly so called, the glow-worm has no connexion. The principal seat of the light is in the penultimate segment of the abdomen; but when in its greatest intensity, it is diffused over several of the adjoining parts. It is a mistake to suppose, as has been so often done, that the male is completely devoid of this property; he also has two luminous points towards the hinder extremity, but they are very minute, and often invisible. The light is continuous, equal, and tranquil, producing a sufficient glow to illuminate all the surrounding blades of herbage, and, when many are together, forming a very pleasing and interesting spectacle. The colour of the light is somewhat greenish; and among the many poets who have celebrated this "earth-born star," we find one of them comparing it to an "emerald of light." It is emitted in considerable quantities only during a few months of the year, first appearing in spring, and ceasing about the middle of July; any manifestation of it after that date is comparatively faint and evanescent. Its presence is occasionally detected also in the larva and nymph; and the eggs, when newly laid, are beautifully luminous. As to the uses of this light, there seems to be no reason to suppose that the popular notion by which it has been long regarded as a "nuptial lamp" is erroneous; although it is very probable that it may be subservient to some other purpose or purposes in the insect's economy, with which we are unacquainted. In its larva state, the glow-worm seems to be carnivorous, feeding on small snails, &c.; and in its mature condition, the little food it requires is vegetable. It is important that this should be kept in mind, because many who have attempted to introduce this interesting insect to places where it did not naturally exist, have failed from attempting to rear the young on vegetable food. The best plan to secure their propagation is to hatch the eggs, and then place the young at liberty under an old hedge, or the moist grassy bank of a rivulet, when they will best provide for themselves.

The Italian glow-worm, named *Luciola* in Italy, is one of the smallest of luminous insects, the ordinary length not exceeding three lines and a half. It is of a blackish-brown colour, the head and thorax reddish-yellow. Both sexes are provided with wings, and use them with equal facility. They occur in very great profusion in the neighbourhood of Genoa, Nice, and generally throughout the central countries of southern Europe. "From the middle of May till the middle of July," says M. Peters, who has lately published, in a foreign journal, some observations on the luminous organs of this insect; "when walking in the vicinity of Nice, one is surprised at the curious spectacle then presented by the millions of small scintillating lights creeping about in every direction, sometimes illuminating the point of a rock, sometimes lighting a deep cavity, sometimes suddenly producing, as with a magician's wand, a brilliant illumination on the dark trunks of the olive trees; a scene which, continually shifting and changing, is of the greatest interest.

This appearance is renewed every evening, but it appears to me to be the more brilliant the greater the degree of humidity in the air. The interval between the scintillations is variable, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter; and if one of these animals be examined while in a phosphorescent state, it is soon seen that the luminosity is intermittent. When the animal is in repose, I have often counted from 80 to 100 luminous discharges in a minute; it then remains for a pretty long time without phosphorescence. There always remains a slight luminosity, which is never wholly extinguished, at the point of the body from which the luminous discharges are made." The luminous region appears to be much larger in the male than in the female of this species, extending in the former along a considerable portion of the under-side of the belly. The lines of the poet, when he says, that

Along the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
The glow-worm lights his gem,

would, therefore, be much more applicable to this insect than the common species to which they refer. When the luminous organs are removed from the insect, they shine for a time with the same intensity as in the living animal, but gradually become fainter, till they are extinguished. If rubbed against any substance, the place shines for an instant with a greenish light, which can be made to re-appear, after extinction, by pouring a little water upon it.

The appearances in question, like many other natural phenomena for which it is difficult to account, have often been regarded with superstitious awe by the more ignorant classes of the community. The fire-flies of America were once considered by the natives as the vehicles for conveying the souls of the dead to their final resting-place; and we are informed by Sir J. E. Smith, that a similar notion exists in Italy regarding the glow-worm of that country. The common people of Genoa, he says, suppose them to be of a spiritual nature, and to come out of the graves, and on this account they regard them with abhorrence. Indeed it may be affirmed, that luminous insects have occasionally excited an analogous feeling even in this country; for there can be little doubt that they sometimes constitute that formidable and mysterious personage, named Jack-o'-Lantern, or Will-o'-the-Wisp, as we shall show in a subsequent notice.

SELF-DEVOTION.

THE story of this novel has been constructed with the view of bringing out in strong colours the principles and morals of self-sacrifice and sisterly affection. The hero, Julian Randolph, and his sister Katherine, are twins, the children of a Scotch clergyman, in whom Christian benevolence is combined with practical sense. His wife, the daughter of a peer, presents a strong contrast to the husband. Brought into a new and less brilliant sphere of life, by what is called an imprudent marriage, she settles into a discontented person, who is only roused from her apathetic selfishness by a great regard for her son. This predilection is considerably heightened when it is announced that Julian was to be formally made the heir of a rich uncle in India.

When he becomes old enough to prepare for entering the world, the wealthy "Uncle Fletcher" is consulted as to the choice of a profession. His wishes on that point, however, are not complied with. It was his desire that "his grand-nephew should be sent to a counting-house in the city, there to acquire the information by which the riches intended for him had been accumulated." But the young gentleman prefers choosing for himself, and we soon find him with the commission, and in the costume, of an ensign in a Highland regiment. It is with these irresistible advantages for such an event, that Julian falls in love; the maiden of his choice being no other than his colonel's daughter, the lady Ida de Mar. Meanwhile the uncle arrives on a visit to the manse, and the nephew, besides having disappointed him in the profession he has chosen, is so engrossed with his lovely neighbour, Lady Ida, that he treats his benefactor with a thoughtless neglect, which creates a most unfavourable impression in the old man's mind. During these occurrences the sister's absorbing affection for her brother is admirably painted. The constant apprehension she labours under of Julian committing himself further, and the amiable sophistry with which she pleads away any blame which is thrown upon his conduct, are minutely and clearly painted. In due time Julian joins his regiment at Brighton. Lord de Mar and his daughter also arrive there, and the young heir to the Indian fortune becomes the idol of the regiment, and the favourite of its reigning toast.

Amongst the neighbours of the Randolphs was Keith Chisholm, a gentleman who had lately come into the estate of his ancestors, Inverhaggernie, on the death of his father; unfortunately, however, the deceased had at one period given a bond of large amount to Lord de Mar, to discharge which the estate is seized, brought to sale, and purchased by Uncle Fletcher. Being thus destitute, the unfortunate Keith Chisholm was obliged to accept a situation in the West Indies, and to prepare to leave his native country. The introduction of Keith Chisholm into

the tale shows its heroine in a new light. She loves; but the delicacy with which the love of the woman is rendered subsidiary to the affection of the sister, constitutes the main charm of the story. Uncle Fletcher, who has gone to Edinburgh, dies there, and the disposition of his fortune is naturally looked to with anxiety. Mr Randolph is the messenger who brings the news to his wife and daughter. When he arrived at the manse, "Katherine now began to discover that her father looked anxious and even careworn, and that he fixed his eye upon her with a peculiar expression of tenderness and thought. But she would not interrupt the comfort of his return with a single question, and went on pressing him to eat, as if his very absence were a thing forgotten in the joy of his arrival."

"You do not ask me about Julian," said he at last, with a kind and yet doubtful smile; "have you no impatience to learn the amount of his inheritance?"

"Oh yes, dearest father," answered Katherine, looking up to him from her footstool, and clasping her hands upon his knee, while her crimson cheek and quick breath betrayed all that was left unsaid.

Mr Randolph looked excited as he raised her fondly in his arms. "My beloved child," said he, in a voice that quivered with feeling; "my noble and true-hearted Katherine, you are the heir of all, and your brother is penniless!"

Katherine's arms dropped down powerless from her father's neck, and she fell back from him a few paces, as if staggered by some physical shock. Her face was white in an instant, and her voice sounded husky as she repeated, "I—I!—Julian penniless! What do you mean, dear father?"

"I mean that Mr Fletcher has bequeathed the whole amount of his property, landed and otherwise, to you upon your coming of age; unreservedly and unconditionally to you and your heirs; with liberty to bestow the sum of five thousand pounds upon Julian, should you desire it."

Katherine burst into tears. "How cruel, how unjust, how unprincipled!" exclaimed she, when her voice was audible; "how unfeelingly poor Julian has been treated—how unworthily Uncle Fletcher has behaved!"

"Hush, hush, my dear Katherine," answered Mr Randolph, with a grave smile; "these are not the words which such intelligence should call forth. Julian is contented; more than contented; happy in the contemplation of his sister's prosperity. Be you also thankful, my child, to Heaven for its gifts to you!"

Katherine commanded her agitation after a moment, and then said, in a tone of infinite expression, "This cannot, in reality, make any difference, except by the mortification which it inflicts on Julian; since even he could not have been master of his fortune previous to his majority, and since he will not now be deprived of it one moment longer. But the injury which Mr Fletcher has done him cannot so easily be repaired."

"Katherine," said Mr Randolph firmly, "I will not listen to words like these. No impulse of generosity or affection must be allowed to hurry you into rash professions of this kind. I will not hear you speak upon the subject to-night."

"Father," replied Katherine, in a tone of reproachful and wounded feeling, "can you suppose it a rash profession, an impulse of generosity which dictated my words? Dear father, do you suppose that I can require reflection to decide in such a matter? Oh, no, no, no! I would rather die this moment. Not even your commands, dearest father, would induce me to retain one sixpence of the fortune that is Julian's."

She spoke in a tone of deep feeling, almost of agony, which went to his heart; and Mr Randolph took her in his arms, and, with a smile of tenderness and encouragement, asked what she would do if she were permitted to act for herself.

"Return dear Julian his own fortune," answered she; "you have told me, that when I shall be of age, it is mine unconditionally, unreservedly; and I will resign it, dearest father, without retaining a guinea."

"Are you aware that in one year's time you will be the heiress of three hundred thousand pounds?" said Mr Randolph.

Katherine hesitated for a moment, and then said, with a smile and a deep blush, "Well, then, I will keep Inverhaggernie."

Mr Randolph's eyes filled with tears as they rested on her. "You have no power, my poor child," said he sorrowfully. "If this could be, I should be well pleased to submit to your generous plan, dear Katherine; but listen for a moment, and I will tell you for what reason it is impossible."

Katherine lifted her eyes anxiously to his face, and he proceeded.

"The terms upon which Mr Fletcher makes you his heiress are these: No part of the property can be alienated above the five thousand pounds mentioned in his will. It is the express command of the testator that this enormous fortune be preserved entire, and no inroad of any kind made in it that will impoverish the legatee. The old man's whim has evidently been that of becoming the founder of a family; and probably foreseeing this extravagant project of yours, he has taken this mode of preventing it, by forbidding any division of the property whatever."

"Well," answered Katherine calmly, "then there is only one course to be pursued: the fortune shall be preserved entire, and Keith will have to pay for his own property. I thank God, dearest father, that In-

* Self Devotion, or the History of Katherine Randolph, by the author of the "Only Daughter." Edited by the author of "The Subaltern." 3 vols. London: Colburn.

verhagernie is preserved; and, oh, I thank and bless Him that dear Julian's prosperity is secured."

"Katherine," said Mr Randolph once more, "I tell you again that I cannot hear such words from you. I, as your father and your guardian, cannot suffer you thus to wrong yourself. Had it been possible to follow your own noble plan, and divide the wealth between you, I should have consented, and blessed God for the arrangement. As it is, I will not suffer you to repeat this proposal."

"Father, dear father, do not insult your Katherine thus," answered the gentle girl, with a fresh burst of weeping, and looking as if the best feelings of her nature were outraged by his opposition. "Do you believe that I could exist under the consciousness of supplanting Julian? Would you doom me to the never-ending torture of living in splendour, while he, our brother and free, our generous, our high-spirited Julian, was doomed to a life of labour and obscurity, and I without the power of affording him the luxuries which could be turned to gall for me? Ask your own heart, dear father, whether it would not kill me before one year were past. O do not treat me as if I were under the influence of a girlish excitement, when in reality it is the truest, gravest worldly sense that governs me."

She seemed exhausted with the force of her own eagerness, and Mr Randolph soothed and re-assured her with his caresses, and his declaration, that what was to make her happiest was to be the course pursued.

"Go you to bed, my love," said he, lighting her candle, and trust all that is in the future to the guidance of Him who will never forsake such as you."

He pressed her tenderly and solemnly, and with a tearful smile she bade him good night, and ascended to her room.

Katherine awoke next morning with a halo of most sweet peace upon her heart. It is true that her father's return had brought with it a heavy disappointment; for, almost unconsciously, she had anticipated, that either by the terms of her uncle's will, or the exercise of Julian's affection, Inverhagernie would have been restored, and the dreary prospect of Keith's long exile put to flight in consequence. But it was otherwise ordained. Providence had superseded both hopes in his own wise arrangement, and the pang which rose in attendance upon her own prospects was quenched in the breast of the true-hearted Katherine by the promising colours in which Julian's were arrayed.

It was a subject of unspeakable rejoicing to Katherine, that all her doubts and fears, all her father's sorrowful predictions, and her mother's exulting expectations, were set at rest by the entire and unlimited confirmation of Julian's prosperity; and the single shadow which hung upon her mind in the contemplation was, that a whole year must elapse before these matters could be finally adjusted, and Julian acknowledged by the world as the heir of his uncle's thousands.

There was no petty gleam of worldly pride or triumph in the prospect of her own magnificent sacrifice. Poor Katherine turned uneasily from the contemplation of her instrumentality in the affair as the single thorn of the rose. "Had Uncle Fletcher only followed the dictates of justice and consistency," thought she, "we should have both been spared a world of inconvenience."

Still, her burden of gratitude to Heaven was sweet, and she lifted up her soul in fervent thanksgiving for the welfare of him so loved and cherished; and if a solitary tear dimmed her eye and paled her cheek as she thought of the fate of one less favoured, she chased away the intrusive sorrow on the instant, and trusted in Heaven, and was at peace."

When the news of Julian's disinheritance reached Brighton, the hitherto marked and cordial friendship of Lord de Mar for him gradually cooled. Mortified and stung by this reverse, young Randolph fancied he observed a similar change in the Lady Ida's deportment, and that she bestowed several marks of her favour upon a rival, Major Moira. This person is a coarse and vulgar-minded man, and takes every opportunity of showing his exultation over Julian's disappointment, and of his own success with the colonel's daughter. An angry altercation respecting a picture takes place at the mess-table, and the scene results in a duel. At the third shot Major Moira is wounded, and in two hours expires. Julian, stung with remorse and mental anguish, is dragged with difficulty from the scene. Before he quits the shores of his native land, which his brother officer and second insist on his doing, an amiable and irresistible impulse forces him to see his father and devoted sister. From fear of being arrested by the officers of justice, who are sent in pursuit of him, he hides in a cave not far from his father's house. Here occurs a scene between the father, his son, and daughter, of highly-wrought pathos. The duellist is, however, wisely advised to surrender to the demands of the law, and he gives himself up to an officer who has arrived in search of him. But he does not enter his prison alone; Katherine bears him company; and Keith Chisholm also volunteers his personal assistance. In due time the whole party arrive at Newgate, and Julian is left for the night in his solitary cell.

In the meantime, reasons appear for supposing that Lord de Mar is secretly anxious that Julian should be convicted. An important witness in the prisoner's favour is kept out of the way by his instrumentality; and Mr Randolph starts for France in search of the fugitive. Lord de Mar has concealed

from his daughter the change of Julian's fortunes, being himself unaware of the sister's intention of making over, on coming of age, the whole property left her by her uncle. He has done this lest Ida's woman's heart should return to Julian from sympathy for his misfortune. At length, however, she learns the fact, and with the boldness of proper but high spirit, instantly seeks Katherine in her lodging, near the brother's prison. The self-devoted was alone, filled with sorrowful apprehension for the issue of her brother's trial. Ida contemplates her for a moment. "At last the natural impulse of the heart predominated, and the high-spirited Ida sprang forward, and flinging her arms around Katherine's neck, buried her face in her bosom."

How eloquent was the clasp of joy and tenderness with which Katherine replied to this gentle appeal—how much did it contain of that mutual understanding which neither of them would have dared to confess in words! Poor Katherine! her whole soul was changed in an instant; she seemed once more to be received within that link of human fellowship which a few minutes before appeared to be broken; and as she soothed the agitation of her youthful visitor, and with a woman's most beautiful and delicate tact strove to encourage and re-assure her, she added stores of happiness to her own half-expended stock in the hasty and undefined impression of the joy that awaited Julian.

It was beautiful to see the ease and grace with which Katherine assumed, as a matter of course, the real object of the Lady Ida's visit—how she immediately adverted to the subject next the hearts of both—and how the gratitude and affection of the proud and sensitive child laid itself at her feet in consequence. They were quite intimate immediately; and from acquaintances of very short standing, became as familiar as though they had been friends from childhood.

"I do not know why I should have felt so afraid to see you," said the Lady Ida with a deep blush; "I am so secure of this step being a right one, that with my father I felt no timidity; but I fancied that one of my own sex might judge differently, and think me bold and headstrong. Sweet Katherine, you know all that is due to a woman's most sensitive dignity, and I am not afraid that, even to gratify your brother, you will in anywise suffer mine to be lightly spoken of. I commit myself to you in all things, and I will not hesitate to declare what brought me hither; it was, and her cheek flushed, and her eye sparkled with energy—"it was to bid you tell Julian, that before this night I never knew of his loss of fortune. Tell him that they kept it from me, on purpose that, while the knowledge of his poverty made him timid, I might suspect his fidelity; and they succeeded so well in influencing my bearing towards him on this assurance, that now I doubt no longer of what has been the cause of his real change of aspect towards myself. I have been very proud and headstrong, dear Katherine," added the ingenuous speaker; "but Julian has not acted quite fairly by me. Had I been stript of rank and fortune, and every other distinction in life, I should never have done him the injustice of believing such a loss the true reason of his estrangement; and now, when I am assured by those who know best that he is penniless, I am proud to declare that the intelligence has been to me a most blessed relief."

The fate of Julian, and his friend Sullivan, who had acted as his second in the unfortunate duel, both being indicted for murder and manslaughter, seemed for a time to tremble in the balance. The evidence was closed—the judge preparing to sum up, when at the latest moment the missing witness appeared. No doubt now hung over the result, and the prisoners were soon acquitted on both charges. This may be said to end the story; for by this time all misunderstandings had been cleared up between the lovers. The Lady Ida de Mar, incited by a noble, almost romantic, sense of justice, became, before the trial, Julian's wife. Then it was that the crowning act of Katherine's self-devotion was performed. She assigned to her brother the whole of her possessions. Moreover, the debt due from Keith Chisholm to Lord de Mar was discovered to be a fraudulent one; and the long-depressed Keith, instead of being obliged to go abroad, recovered his estate, returned to Scotland, and fulfilled his wishes respecting Katherine Randolph.

"It was among the early days of April, that Keith found himself riding once more along the margin of Loch Urie; and though there is little trace of the awakening of the spring in the Highlands so early as that beyond the glorious purity of the atmosphere, and the lucid clearness of the streams and rivers, yet to him the sun had never shone so brightly, nor the earth laughed beneath his rays with a more joyous cadence. And it is fair to add, independently of the joy which dwelt within his heart, and sent its own bright colouring over all he looked upon, the scene through which that solitary ride extended was every way in unison with the sweetest promise, and the smiling aspect of a happy man's fate. The woods were still brown and leafless, although their delicate sprays were pencilled out upon a clear and glowing sky, and waved to and fro to the call of a breeze, soft and fragrant as any that visits the glens even at mid-summer. The turf over which the waters of the loch broke in music was still bare and withered; but the waves themselves had the brightest purple tint of June, and the ripples sparkled and flashed in the sun,

as if to show the example of gladness to the drowsy earth."

The manse looked down upon the traveller from its romantic and pretty eminence with a smile of welcome, and, apparently without being conscious of the act, Keith checked the sharp trot of his steed, and threw the reins on his neck, as if he was willing to feast his heart upon the anticipation of the joy before him, even at the expense of postponing the reality. He strained his eyes in all directions, in hopes that some living object of affection might meet his gaze; and so keen was it, that in a little while he succeeded in tracing out at least some portion of the group he sought for.

On the sharp ridge of Sebian Larig there were three figures, a lady and two gentlemen; and even at such a distance Keith, by a minute investigation, made out the former to be, not Katherine, but his sister Marion, and her companions to be Mr Randolph and Sullivan, who had accompanied his friend to Scotland, and was still lingering among the happy circle. They were sauntering leisurely along, every now and then stopping to turn towards the opening strath, that permitted them a view of the fair glen of Inverhagernie; and Keith could see poor Marion's head droop sorrowfully when the gaze was ended, as if she had been indulging in one of her fond adieus to the home from which she believed herself destined to part for ever.

How his heart swelled with joy and gratitude to Heaven for the blessed consciousness that he was soon to turn her mourning into gladness! He watched them for a while as their figures were traced out upon the sky, and then acknowledging to himself that there was a far dearer member of the re-united group wanting, he quickened his pace and rode towards the house. As he wound along the twisted path, he heard a light musical laugh, that made him move more cautiously, for it was the voice of the Lady Ida, and he felt a half-unwillingness to meet even her and Julian before he had lightened his heart of its load of joy to Katherine. Accordingly he rode very slowly up, and the bushes of laurel and holly screened him completely from the view of those who stood behind them, while glimpses of open space revealed to him their attitudes and employments.

Keith beckoned to Donald to take his horse before emerging from the screen of laurels, and then trod so close upon Katherine's footsteps, that he was in the parlour almost as soon as she. She advanced straight to the window and threw it up, and Keith perceived that the excitement of looking out for him had unfitted her for anything in the shape of employment. One instant's observation of her face, in which the paleness and the flush of anticipation succeeded each other every moment, was enough to elicit the single sigh which betrays his presence; and in the next, Katherine, with a scream of delight, had flown into his arms.

The bright shadowy sunlight of the approaching evening filled the room when Mr Randolph entered; and in a little while he was made acquainted with the source of Katherine's sparkling tears and of Keith's look of happiness.

"God bless you, my Katherine!" said he, as he folded her to his heart in pious and tender joy; "you cast your bread upon the waters in singleness of heart—praise be to Him through whose bounty you have found it after many days!"

Here terminates "Self-Devotion." The intelligent reader will perceive that little originality can be claimed for the incidents or—for the exception of the well-painted portrait of the heroine—for the characters. Amongst the latter we recognise the oft-painted hero with his handsome person, fascinating manners, cardinal virtues, and just enough of headstrong impulse to force him into such adventures as are necessary to make the story exciting. Here, too, is the exemplary father with his sage experiences and moral advice. In Lord de Mar may be perceived the usual villain; in his daughter the well-known haughty beauty, made to descend from the altitude of her pride by the power of love. Lastly, the character of Fletcher presents that eternal, testy, rich uncle from India, who makes his appearance in nine out of every ten novels and farces, to scatter his wealth among those of the characters whom the author desires us to believe deserve it the most. Neither is the incident of the duel altogether new, for it would be difficult to name a fiction where such an encounter is not described. Some novelties are, however, to be found in the details of the hero's trial, which betray a glaring non-acquaintance with the forms of criminal proceedings. The story was, however, written by a female, and it is not to be expected, or indeed desired, that a young lady should show any profound knowledge of the interior of Newgate, or of the technicalities of a trial for murder. But the work appears with the name of a well-known writer as editor. Upon him, therefore, the blame of such mistakes must rest.

Though it may seem paradoxical, yet it is true, that the faults we have named enhance rather than detract from the admirable feeling and nice tact with which this story is executed. That power over a reader's mind must be great indeed, which, in spite of well-worn incidents and far from original characters, chains his attention to the pages, and carries him through them with an avidity which increases with the progress of the story. It was so with us. Though we saw in the different turns of the story, and in every character, that which we had seen before, yet it had seldom or never

been presented in such captivating colours. The devotedness of the heroine, not only to her twin-brother, but to all whom it is in her power to benefit, is portrayed with the nicest discrimination. There is an invalid sister of Keith Chisholm, to whom she is incessant in her gentle ministry; then there is the devotion to her mother, in spite of a painful preference that selfish person evinces for Julian. Her devotion, again, gentle, maidenly, but deep, to her lover—all these nicer shades of one feeling display, in the conception, a knowledge of female character, and, in the portrayal, an amount of literary ability, which has not often been surpassed. Some of these touches, indeed, are so beautifully minute, that it appears impossible for any but a female hand to trace them.

It is painful to be obliged to add, that all the promise which has so fully budded forth in "Self-Devotion" is prematurely blighted; "for," in the words of the editor's preface, "Harriette Campbell has been removed, in the very spring-time of youth and beauty, from this world to a better, without having been permitted so much as to see, in their perfect state, the results of some months of light, but not, therefore, unlabouring exertion." Miss Campbell, the authoress of "Self-Devotion," is no more.

BREAKFASTS.

THE temperate, judicious, and properly-timed use of food takes a high place in the art of preserving health; for nature is so frequently and fatally tampered with, as to render that an art which, in reality, art is none. Over-feeding, feeding at too long intervals, from want of proper attention, or to create false appetites, and feeding upon food which, though agreeable to the palate, is injurious to the digestive organs, is far more detrimental to health than hunger would be.

The first meal of the day is of great importance. The digestive organs having done their work during sleep, the frame is brought to a state the best adapted for receiving food. "Tired nature's sweet restorer" has not only refreshed the mental faculties, but has induced the distribution of the previous day's aliment over the system, to invigorate its every fibre and its every attribute—the appetite included. Although at other times hunger is by no means conducive to good spirits, yet an individual is never on such excellent terms with himself, and with everything around him, as when he gets out of bed with a hearty desire for his breakfast. The sooner, therefore, he satisfies that desire the better.

"Taking a walk before breakfast" is an old custom which many sanction, but which, like many other old customs, is of highly questionable propriety. We must consider that "not only," as an eminent physician remarks, "have the stomach and its adjacent parts been entirely empty for some hours, but the absorbents, and other parts not engaged in the function of alimentation, have likewise been in a state of repose," and demand, without much loss of time, to be put into requisition. A delay of half an hour after rising should, for this reason, be the most that ought to take place. We must further reflect, that during the whole night a considerable exhalation from the skin and lungs has been going on, which deprives the system, during sleep, of fluids by insensible perspiration, to an amount said to be twice as great as when awake.† This, and the subtraction of moisture from the frame by breathing, cause a corresponding demand for fluids in the morning. Hence the reason why our first daily meal is almost universally of a more fluid nature than subsequent ones. To show the eagerness of the stomach for food, and particularly for fluids after a night's rest, Dr Combe adduces the following instances:—"So rapid is absorption from the stomach in the morning, that I have repeatedly seen nine tumblers of a saline mineral water taken at eight o'clock, and a very hearty breakfast finished within half an hour after the water was drunk! When in bad health three years ago, I observed almost equal expedition in my own person. I took half a pint of ass's milk at seven o'clock, and in consequence of coughing violently, was frequently seized with vomiting and retching within twenty minutes after taking it; but only twice or thrice was any portion of the milk perceptible, although the stomach was entirely emptied. This was even more remarkable than the other case, inasmuch as milk undergoes digestion, which water does not. In allusion to this rapidity of absorption, Sir Francis Head, in speaking of the quantity of the chalybeate waters swallowed of a morning at the Brunnens of Nassau, humorously remarks, that 'one would think that this deluge of cold water would leave little room for tea and sugar; but, miraculous as it may sound, by the time I got to my "Hof" there was as much stomach in the vessel as when she sailed; besides this, the steel created an appetite which it was very difficult to govern.'"

All this proves that the great reduction, before breakfast, of the quantity and quality of the circulating fluids, produces a certain degree of debility which is favourable to the action of any morbid cause; such as bad air or infection. It is in this state that the morning walker exposes himself to the vapours and exhalations which the sun is busy in raising, and which are so well adapted for inflicting colds, catarrhs, and agues. It was this condition of susceptibility that

caused so large a proportion of cholera cases to occur in the morning in individuals who had gone to bed quite well. Nor is it the only reason to be adduced against the practice of morning walks. Any considerable personal exertion at that hour is sure to leave the system languid for all the remainder of the day. As a means of obtaining an appetite where none exists, the expedient more frequently fails than otherwise; for although the abstinence and exercise increase the necessity for food, they do not always augment the desire for it. A faint rather than a hungry sensation is the result. The true remedy of want of appetite in the morning is simple enough:—Eat no suppers at night.

Some who would not take extensive walks before breakfast, yet might presume that the few ante-breakfast hours might be devoted to study without any disadvantage. There is even a sort of prejudice in favour of morning as a time for mental operations, as if the mind was then believed to be somehow in a clearer state than at any other period of the day. For this reason, we often hear of eminent literary and philosophical personages, whose habit it was to rise early, and read or write for four or five hours before breakfast. It was, we believe, the constant custom of Sir Walter Scott. By far the greater part of those tales, which have so witched the world, were penned between six and nine in the morning, after which time the author used to consider his labours as over for the day, all the rest of which he could devote to his guests, or to country recreations. The reference is rather unlucky to one who was cut off by paralysis in his sixty-second year. If Sir Walter had risen at eight to a good breakfast, and, after the proper interval of from half an hour to an hour for digestion, gone to his study for three hours, he might have done as much or more work, and preserved his health to a riper age. In reality, the four hours ensuing upon breakfast is the period during which the mind is most fit for exertion—the very pith and marrow of the day. It is unfortunate for barristers that, from their having to give this portion of the day to attendance at the law courts, they are tempted, in many instances, to take the three or four hours before breakfast for their most laborious studies. It is a system fraught with dangerous consequences. In fact, the acknowledgedly pernicious practice of studying through the midnight hours is scarcely, if at all, worse. If it be absolutely necessary to devote to study the hours from five or six to nine, a slight refreshment, such as a cup of coffee and slice of bread, should always be taken beforehand, in order to sustain the strength till the regular breakfast hour.

Invitations to breakfast are convenient in many circumstances. It is peculiarly a *patron's* invitation. It suits the resources of clergymen and other persons of limited income. But it is a practice which should always be regarded as only one under sufferance, and to be superseded by invitations to dinner as soon as possible. The fact is, breakfast is not properly a social meal. It is purely a matter of business for the satisfaction of the appetite. The mind is not then in a proper state for social intercourse, being generally occupied with the plans and duties of the day. The master of the house is pondering over his worldly affairs, the mistress is mentally settling her arrangements for the day's domestic economy, whilst the heads of the younger folks are full of their coming lessons. And thus it mostly happens, that the conversation of the family breakfast is carried on in short, absolutely necessary questions, and in monosyllabic replies. The occupations of the table are of too onerous a nature to admit of much leisure for talking, till the meal is over. Hence it is that breakfast-parties, even at weddings, are entirely nominal, every person having completed the operation hours before arriving, so that they are properly after-breakfast parties. The only morning meal parties at which anything like real business is done, are hunting breakfasts; for although each prudent guest has substantially broken his fast before starting, yet he has, most likely, ridden some miles to the "meet," and, like Sir Francis Head, finds considerable stowage still.

"Going out to breakfast," that is so say, really to break your fast, may, however, be allowable, provided the following conditions are complied with:—You must have but a very short distance to walk to your entertainer's residence, which should be in the country, and command a fine prospect. It must be in summer, and if the morning be not extremely fine, you had better send an excuse. The repast should be spread at a parlour window, which opens upon a lawn. The purity of the air, the freshness of the scene, are compensations for leaving your own roof previous to breaking your fast. But in the winter, the grand charm of breakfast is having it at home. The scenery, in miniature, which presents itself in the bright clear fire, the hissing urn, the spotless cloth, the tempting viands, though they convey a more sensual impression, impart a no less pleasing one than the summer scene we have adverted to. Bachelors do not enjoy this treat in full perfection. Though, as before remarked, breakfast is by no means a social meal, it is rendered all the more pleasing by the presence of a cherished companion. Having settled when and how breakfast is to be most advantageously partaken of, let us now advert to the articles of food which compose it.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, it is said that beef and beer were the leading articles of a family breakfast. Tea and coffee were unknown at that period; neither having come into general use till the beginning

of the last century. The advantages of these wholesome beverages over malt liquors, are too manifest to be dwelt on. They afford a stimulus to the system, without producing the slightest intoxicating effect. For this reason, the introduction of those articles has had a most beneficial moral effect upon Europeans. They have gradually become a substitute for more injurious drinks. Raynal, the Jesuit missionary, states, that the use of tea has contributed more to the sobriety of the Chinese than the severest laws against drunkenness. Amongst the poorer classes of Europeans, however, tea and coffee are unattainable from their expensiveness; and different kinds of meal porridge are used for breakfast by the greatest part of the peasantry in every European country. Amongst the middle classes, tea or coffee is nearly as universal. The former finds most favour with the people of Great Britain, and their descendants abroad. Our trans-Atlantic brethren give the preference to green tea, we to black, or to a mixture of both. Coffee is also to be found upon the breakfast-tables of both, almost as often as tea, which, on the European continent, is but sparingly used. In France, for example, it is extremely rare to see tea drunk at breakfast; and for coffee, the less comforting beverage of native wine is substituted in a *dejeuner à la fourchette*, or "knife-and-fork breakfast."

Coffee is peculiarly adapted to refresh the system in a warm climate. In the east, therefore, it is in more general favour than elsewhere. The Turks and modern Egyptians take, the instant they rise, a cup of coffee. This supplies the demands of the absorbents till breakfast time, which is at noon; and then bread, eggs, butter, cheese, stewed beans, clouted cream, or curds, are added to the repast.

Breakfasts, even in England, are not by any means of one class or character. Almost every county boasts of something peculiar to itself. In Yorkshire, it is not uncommon to see a relic of the Elizabethan age in the foaming tankard. In Oxfordshire and Norfolk, brawn is a common addendum. Along the western coast of England, fish boiled, broiled, or fried, is seldom absent from the breakfast table. Eggs, broiled ham, or bacon, and cold meat, have no peculiar locality; they are met with everywhere; and some experience of English inns leads us to believe that a pigeon pie is thought by innkeepers a very appropriate breakfast dish. The counties of Devonshire and Cornwall are well-known for the miscellaneous variety of the morning repast, which has been known to include every article we have already mentioned, with the addition, in the former county, of a peculiar preparation known as "squab pie," a dish which includes a greater number and variety of ingredients than we have space or inclination to enumerate. The breakfast of the humbler classes, and of the young generally, in Scotland, is oatmeal porridge with milk—a dish against which scarcely an exception can be taken. But the higher classes, especially in rural situations, and when the entertainment of strangers is in question, usually indulge not only in tea and coffee, but in a variety of substantial and delicacies which makes their breakfast approximate to a dinner. The tasty game, the short mountain mutton, the delicious cuts of kippered salmon hissing from the gridiron, the finnan haddocks wrapped in snowy-white napkins to preserve the heat and aroma, the stoups of cream, jellies, marmalades, and breads of every order and genus, which are exhibited at this repast, render it the admiration of tourists.

OREGON.

IN looking at a map of North America, one of the principal objects which attract the eye is a considerable ridge of mountains which divides the eastern from the western portion of the continent. This ridge consists of the "Rocky Mountains;" and the country between them and the Pacific Ocean is that to which the above name is most frequently given, though in some maps it is indicated as simply "The Western Territory." The same district is, again, very often called Columbia—a most inconvenient appellation, tending to confound it with the Columbia of South America. The southern boundary of the district is a lateral ridge, said to be given out by the Rocky Mountains, about the 42d degree of north latitude, whence it stretches northward to the boundaries of the Russian territory, about latitude 54. Oregon is claimed as the property of Great Britain, in conjunction with Canada; but a partial claim is also set up by the United States, and, unfortunately, so undefined is the line of demarcation put forward by the contending parties, that a new and intricate "boundary question" is threatened between Great Britain and the United States, just as the north-eastern line has been amicably adjusted.

As the boundaries are not clearly assigned by any authority, and as the interior is unexplored, it is difficult to state precisely the dimensions or character of Oregon. Balbi,* on the authority of Mr Darby, an American geographer, gives 225,655 square miles as its extent. From what has been said by various authors, we gather that the face of the country presents, from the Rocky Mountains towards the Pacific, an abrupt slope. This slope is formed by belts, consisting of immense terraces or descending plains, disposed one below the other, and separated by two ridges of mountains, running parallel to each other, to the Rocky Mountains, and to the sea; the westernmost being one hundred and fifty miles east of

* Digestion and Dietetics, p. 106, by Andrew Combe, M.D.
† Paris on Diet, p. 102.

* Geographie, p. 1012.

the Pacific. The peaks of these hills are always covered with snow. Pines of immense height, spruce, and other trees, cover the hills below the snow line; but the terraces are scantily supplied with timber, except near the rivers. Here, however, the soil is said to be good, furnishing grasses and edible roots in great profusion. Though towards the Mexican frontier the climate is mild, the rainy season is long; commencing in October, and not ending till April. The tempests of wind and rain which occasionally occur are terrible. Near the northern limit of Oregon, the extremes of heat and cold are greater, whilst the more central portions of the district partake of each of these characteristics—when not varied by local circumstances—according to their position. The principal animals are bears, wild horses, small deer, wolves, foxes, and dogs. Otters and beavers are plentiful on the banks of the rivers. The breed of horses is described as remarkably good, and to vie with the steeds of Virginia and Andalusia for strength and beauty; and so abundant, that the tribe of Indians where they are most plentiful, is called *The Camanail*, or people "who never walk." The human inhabitants of the country are its aborigines, absurdly called "Indians." These the above quoted authority states at no greater a number than 171,000 persons, scattered over the vast region.

Out of this immense tract, there is only one point to which any considerable attention has been hitherto directed. This is the principal river, the Oregon, or Columbia; and a portion of the lands is intersected by this stream between its source in the Rocky Mountains and its mouth in the Pacific. The great chain separates those waters of North America which run to the eastward from those which take a westward course; and what has rendered the river Oregon an attractive source of attention, is the fact of its source being near to that of the great Missouri river, which, taking an opposite direction to the former, falls into the Atlantic; both streams being navigable up to points only two hundred miles distant from each other. "Thus," in the words of an American state paper, "are the two great oceans separated by a single portage of two hundred miles. The practicability of a speedy, safe, and easy communication with the Pacific, is no longer a matter of conjecture. The Rocky Mountains, in several places, are so smooth and open, that the labour of ten men for twenty days would enable a wagon, with its usual freight, to pass, with great facility, from the navigable part of the Missouri to that of the Columbia." The doubtful practicability of such a communication (which is described in the same report as "certain, safe, and easy,") across the entire breadth of the North American continent, to the government of that country, will be readily judged of by the following statements.

The river Columbia, or Oregon, appears to be formed by the union of two branches, called the Flat-head, or Clark's river, and the Flatbow, or Northern river, between latitudes 42 and 54 north. From this point to the Pacific ocean intervene about 650 miles in a straight line; but if the windings of the immense stream be taken into the computation, it is probable that more than double that distance would be found occupied by its bed. In the earlier part of this river's course, the country is but slightly wooded, and the soil being thin, is far from productive; but about two hundred miles farther westward, the sides of the stream are heavily timbered with various kinds of wood, well adapted either for ship-building or carpentry. Near the sea, some of the pine trees rival the gigantic woods of Norway, or the more recently discovered pine regions of New Zealand. Mr Ross Cox, who, during many years, travelled in this district, describes one tree, near Fort Astoria, which the Canadian hunters call the king of pines. Its circumference, at ten feet above the soil, is 46 feet; its total height is reckoned to exceed 300 feet, of which the lower half is free from branches. The same traveller saw another in Southern Oregon, which was 260 feet high above the lowest branch, where the trunk was upwards of 50 feet in girth. The cedars and alders are also found extremely large in the neighbourhood of the fort, oak and ash trees a few leagues above it.

Fort Astoria is the only settlement or trading station that has ever been made in this enormous tract of country. This station is situated at the mouth of the Oregon river, a few miles from the sea, and takes its name from Mr Jacob Astor, an American merchant, by whom it was established. Other settlements had been previously made by the English and Spanish in the same neighbourhood; for, in 1789, the British had succeeded so far in forming a colony, that, besides a few of that nation, seventy Chinese had been procured to emigrate to and settle on the banks of the Oregon. This is a remarkable fact, as emigration is discouraged by the Chinese government to the extent of cutting off the emigrant's head, should he accidentally, or unwisely, return to his native country. The Spaniards, however, drove this colony from the coast, but made nothing of it themselves. At length Mr Jacob Astor formed, in 1811, the trading depot we have already named, which, but for the bad management of the persons he employed, would doubtless have become an important trading colony. Unluckily, however, war broke out between the United States and this country in 1812, and, in the following year, Astoria was taken by the English, and re-named Fort George. The fur trade is still carried on here, the principal market being the Chinese port of Canton, to which the fort is opposite, though at a very great distance across the Pacific. Bears, beaver, and other skins, are bought from the native hunters in exchange for manufactured articles.

The security and natural capabilities of this part of America for colonisation, may be judged of by the following account of an excursion from Astoria up the Oregon, extracted from Washington Irving's "Astoria." The reader will also perceive how widely it differs from the statements in the state paper we have referred to.

"The little squadron of canoes set sail with a favourable breeze, and soon passed Tongue point, a long, high, and

rocky promontory, covered with trees, and stretching far into the river. Opposite to this, on the northern shore, is a deep bay, where the Columbia anchored at the time of the discovery, and which is still called Gray's Bay, from the name of her commander.

From hence the general course of the river, for about seventy miles, was nearly south-east; varying in breadth according to its bays and indentations, and navigable for vessels of 300 tons. The shores were in some places high and rocky, with low marshy islands at their feet, subject to inundation, and covered with willows, poplars, and other trees that love an alluvial soil. Sometimes the mountains receded, and gave place to beautiful plains and noble forests; while the river margin was richly fringed with trees of deciduous foliage; the rough uplands were crowned by majestic pines, and firs of gigantic size, some towering to the height of between two and three hundred feet, with proportionate circumference. Advancing upward, they came to the great Columbian valley, so called by Lewis and Clarke. It is sixty miles in width, and extends far to the south-south-east, between parallel ridges of mountains, which bound it on the east and west. Through the centre of this valley flowed a large and beautiful stream, called the Wallamet, which came wandering, for several hundred miles, through a yet unexplored wilderness. The sheltered situation of this immense valley had an obvious effect upon the climate. It was a region of great beauty and luxuriance, with lakes and pools, and green meadows shaded by noble groves. Various tribes were said to reside in this valley, and along the banks of the Wallamet.

About eight miles above the mouth of the Wallamet the little squadron arrived at Vancouver's point, so called in honour of that celebrated voyager by his lieutenant, Broughton, when he explored the river. This point is said to present one of the most beautiful scenes on the Columbia; a lovely meadow with a silver sheet of limpid water in the centre, enlivened by wild fowl, a range of hills crowned by forests, while the prospect is closed by Mount Hood, a magnificent mountain rising into a lofty peak, and covered with snow; the ultimate landmark of the first explorers of the river.

Point Vancouver is about one hundred miles from Astoria. Here the reflux of the tide ceases to be perceptible. To this place vessels of two and three hundred tons burden may ascend. The party under the command of Mr Stuart had been three or four days in reaching it, though we have forbore to notice their daily progress and nightly encampments.

From Point Vancouver the river turned towards the north-east, and became more contracted and rapid, with occasional islands and frequent sand-banks. These islands are furnished with a number of ponds, and at certain seasons abound with wild fowl. The shores are low, and closely wooded, with such an undergrowth of vines and rushes as to be almost impassable.

About thirty miles above Point Vancouver the mountains again approach on both sides of the river, which is bordered by stupendous precipices, covered with the fir and the white cedar, and enlivened occasionally by beautiful cascades leaping from a great height, and sending up wreaths of vapour. One of these precipices or cliffs is curiously worn by time and weather, so as to have the appearance of a ruined fortress, with towers and battlements, beetling high above the river; while two small cascades, 150 feet in height, pitch down from the fissures of the rocks.

The turbulence and rapidity of the current, continually augmenting as they advanced, gave the voyagers intimation that they were approaching the great obstructions of the river, and at length they arrived at Strawberry Island, so called by Lewis and Clarke, which lies at the foot of the first rapid. The falls or rapids of the Columbia are situated about one hundred and eighty miles above the mouth of the river. The first is a perpendicular cascade of twenty feet, after which there is a swift descent for a mile, between islands of hard black rock, to another pitch of eight feet divided by two rocks. About two and a-half miles below this, the river expands into a wide basin, seemingly dammed up by a perpendicular ridge of black rock. A current, however, sets diagonally to the left of this rocky barrier, where there is a chasm forty-five yards in width. Through this the whole body of the river roars along, swelling, and whirling, and boiling for some distance in the wildest confusion. Through this tremendous channel the intrepid explorers of the river, Lewis and Clarke, passed safely in their boats; the danger being, not from the rocks, but from the great surges and whirlpools.

At the distance of a mile and a-half from the foot of this narrow channel, is a rapid formed by two rocky islands; and two miles beyond is a second great fall, over a ledge of rocks twenty feet high, extending nearly from shore to shore. The river is again compressed into a channel from fifty to a hundred feet wide, worn through a rough bed of hard black rock, along which it boils and roars with great fury for the distance of three miles. This is called 'The Long Narrows.'

From the travels of Messrs Lewis and Clarke we also learn, that at the earlier course of the Oregon, nearer to the bases of the Rocky Mountains, the current is often interrupted by falls and rapids. This, then, is the "certain, safe, and easy" channel of communication between the two great oceans of the world. An attentive examination of the best accounts of the country, shows the utter impracticability of the river as a means of commercial transit, to say nothing of the doubt naturally arising concerning the statement, that the Rocky Mountains are in any part capable of being rendered completely passable by "ten men in twenty days." The difficulties encountered by Clarke and Lewis, also by Bonneville and others who have crossed the gigantic mountains, tend to throw suspicion upon, if not to invalidate, the assertions made by the framers of the "state paper" we have quoted. Yet, upon statements equally imperfect, laws are framed in more countries than the United States.

We dismiss the subject with a single remark: the vast tract of land composing the Oregon territory is a wild,

though in many places not unfertile, desert, with a turbulent and almost useless river running through it to the Pacific. Commercially speaking, we should say it was not worth a shilling to England, though, as a back-ground to Canada on the Pacific, it may be esteemed a country of some small value in a political and military point of view.

HUMBLE EFFORTS IN PHILANTHROPY.

THE same sort of difference which existed between the Vicar of Wakefield, who married and reared a family, and those who, to use his phrase, continue single, and only talk of population, seems to exist at the present day between a set of philosophers who are always calling for parliamentary enactments to benefit the people, and those who actually apply their own time, care, and money, to bring about that end. To speak as seriously as possible—without disparaging the value of legislative interference, which may be allowed to be indispensable for some of the most important regulations affecting the welfare of the people—it is very surprising how much can be done to correct social and domestic errors, promote education, succour affliction, and substitute habits of industry, cleanliness, frugality, temperance, and self-respect, for the reverse, by comparatively private and even individual efforts. In the kind surveillance which a good neighbour can exercise, there is sometimes more efficacy for the reform of a wretched household in all respects, than could be found in pompous institutions of any kind. Small associations of benevolent and moral natures for such ends are calculated, perhaps, to be not less powerfully serviceable in proportion.

We have been led into these remarks in consequence of accidentally becoming acquainted with the acts of an obscure Parisian association for benevolent purposes, taking its name appropriately from the celebrated St Vincent de Paul.* It was commenced, about the year 1833, by eight young students, "richer in good intentions than in money," as they themselves inform us, and whose first and almost only means of relief for the poor whom they undertook to visit, were the proceeds of some literary articles which they wrote for one of the periodicals of the day. According to a memoir before us, "the first two months of their existence as a society had scarcely elapsed, when their number had already increased to fifteen. In the course of 1834, they undertook to visit one of the prisons of Paris, destined exclusively to juvenile delinquents, endeavouring, by every kind and gentle means, to gain their confidence, and to reclaim them from vice. About the end of 1835, their numbers having now swelled to nearly a hundred, they formed themselves into four sections, each choosing throughout Paris an appropriate field for exertion, and, before the close of the year, they had, in addition to their previous charities, taken upon them the charge of a number of orphans. Since then they have been advancing steadily, and various branches of the society now extend their beneficial influence over twenty-seven different parishes of Paris, and two of the suburban districts. In all, there are now belonging to the above society, in Paris alone, nearly one thousand active members, occupied in visiting the poor at their own homes, instructing the ignorant, and relieving the distressed; watching over the progress of their children at school, and providing employment for them as they grow up; sheltering a number of destitute orphans, and comforting within their prison walls those early victims of crime, whose tender age might, in many cases, hold out a reasonable hope of amendment; were they not too often consigned to irremediable corruption, from being mercilessly thrown into the fangs of old and confirmed profligates, and given over in pupillage to the felons' jail. Not only do these young men watch thus kindly and constantly over the interests of the poor committed to their care, but when any of their wards are called away from this world, they are not unfrequently seen to follow the almost solitary hearse that bears their mortal remains to the grave.

At the close of their academical career, many of the original members of this society returned of course to their respective homes, and became gradually dispersed throughout the different provinces; but carrying with them that reward of virtue which springs, even in this world, from the happy consciousness of having endeavoured to do good, their dispersion soon became a gain to the society, by proving, in course of time, the means of extending its benefits to the country at large. The statistics of the society now stands as follows:—There are established throughout France eighty-six auxiliary branches of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, spreading over forty different dioceses, taking in forty-five of the principal towns, and (making allowance for deaths, and for the proportion of members living in places where no auxiliary branches have yet been established) numbering at the present moment considerably upwards of four thousand members, including honorary ones.

The principal charities to which the society has hitherto turned its attention are as follows:—1. They visit the poor at their own homes, in order to ascertain the nature and extent of their distress, with a view to its more effectual relief. The poor man's home, as the report of the society very justly remarks, is, as it were, the starting point of all charitable designs, since no spectacle is so likely to remind us of the inexhaustible resources of Christian mercy, as that of the endless variety of human misery. The number of poor families thus visited and relieved amounted, at the close of 1841, to five thousand three hundred and thirty-seven, giving of individuals benefited about twenty thousand.—2. They exert themselves to rectify illicit marriages among the poor. One of the greatest evils that have resulted from the spread of infidel principles among the poorer classes of

* American State Papers. No. 497. Vol. 23.

* See an account of this singular hero of the benevolent passion in the Journal, No. 530.

France, is the frightful amount of concubinage that exists among them. As a remedy for this, a charitable society was established in Paris, about seventeen years ago, of which the object is to facilitate, to the poor thus situated, the means of emerging from their criminal state, by procuring for them all the necessary legal documents, introducing them to the clergy, &c. In this manner, it has already been instrumental in reclaiming many families from vice and misery, having, up to January 1842, succeeded in rectifying eight thousand six hundred and ninety-five such marriages, thus rescuing from their sinful state seventeen thousand three hundred and ninety individuals, to say nothing of the benefits conferred upon their offspring. The members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul are valuable auxiliaries to the above institution, in discovering among the poor whom they visit fit objects for its solicitude.—3. Struck with the many dangers to which they found the infant children of the poor too often exposed at home from carelessness, or want of sufficient leisure on the part of their parents, the members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul have been active throughout different parts of France in the formation of infant schools for children, from three to seven years of age.—4. They also watch the progress of poor children while at school. The object here is to see that the children be not removed too soon from school, under the plea of poverty on the part of the parents, and that the children themselves do apply with more care to their tasks, from the consciousness that their progress is constantly watched over by those whom they have it in their power to make friends of for after-life.—5. Each apprentice has his own special patron among the members of the society. This patron is the guide and protector of his ward, visits him occasionally at his master's premises, inquires into his conduct, and encourages him at times by some slight recompense for himself, or useful present for his parents. In fixing the terms of the apprenticeship, care is taken that the children be left at liberty to attend to all their religious duties upon Sundays, and they are not unfrequently assembled together on those days after the hours of service, their patrons joining with them in some innocent pastime, or walking out with them to the country. The advantages of such a system to both children and parents are so self-evident, that they need not even be alluded to here.—6. The next object of the society is to guard those same apprentices, when grown up to manhood, and thrown upon the resources of their own labour, against the dangers to which they are often too much exposed from bad company, secret societies, &c. Hence, they furnish them with proper recommendations wherever they are going, and take care that they are never altogether lost sight of by the society.—7. They visit the sick in the public hospitals. The period of sickness, says the report, is always a favourable moment for Christian charity. 'Tis often the only one in which it is possible to get access to the labouring man, whose every instant of the day is taken up with his work. Unaccustomed to have nothing to do, and but little in the habit of drawing upon his own mental resources, he welcomes all the more readily the friend who visits his sick-bed, and is generally willing enough to listen to good advice. In one hospital alone, during the course of the last year, the result of those visits has been, that forty individuals were induced to comply with their religious duties who never would have thought of it otherwise.—8. They visit the prisons, especially those destined to juvenile delinquents; another of their objects being to exert a beneficial moral and religious influence over the army.

The society, now in the ninth year of its existence, has already collected and spent £16,000 sterling in the above philanthropic designs, and is now in the receipt of upwards of £6000 annually.

Another example of such private societies is, from a local cause, better known to us, and we are induced to notice it by a hope of stirring up a similar spirit in other quarters. It has sprung up in the Catholic body of our city, which comprehends a pretty large portion of the very humblest class of citizens, including a considerable number of poor Irish. The Holy Guild of St Joseph, as this association is called, is primarily a friendly society, of which the ordinary members, by virtue of a stated monthly payment, become entitled to a weekly allowance in sickness, and an annual payment after the age of sixty-five; it also embraces a life-insurance fund. In these objects it strictly follows the rules of an association, of which we formerly took favourable notice—the Edinburgh School of Arts Friendly Society (see No. 523). It is from the proceeds of contributions by well-disposed parties and honorary members, that the Guild seeks to work out some more strictly benevolent ends, particularly the improvement of the dwellings of the poor of the Catholic communion. This it does by proposing premiums, consisting of useful and ornamental articles of furniture, for the most neatly-kept houses, and by inscribing the names of the winners of premiums in a superb volume, which is paraded on all public occasions. At a soiree of the body in October last, the first distribution of prizes took place, and it was surprising what a multitude they amounted to, although only thirty pounds had been spent upon them. Tears came to the eyes of many present when it was announced that the winner of the first prize was a poor blind woman named Rose McCormick, who daily sits in one of the thoroughfares of the city, playing upon a small hand organ, to excite the charity of the passers by.

It appears to us that, in giving attention to the houses of the poor, this society begins in the right place. An ill-kept home is perhaps one of the most effective of all the demoralising influences that operate upon the poor. It breaks up the household affections, and can rarely fail to send the bread-winner on the too well-known career so sure to lead to destruction. Keep the fireside right, and a humble family may be considered as in the way of virtue.

All must heartily concur in the following observations made at the above-mentioned soiree by Dr Gillis, one of the leading clergymen of the body: "It seems to me impossible to estimate too highly the advantages which

must inevitably flow in course of time, from the successful working of this system of honourable competition amongst the best disposed inhabitants of our densely-populated districts; for, while it opens the way to frequent and kindly intercourse between the more opulent and the more humble classes of the community, it cannot but confirm us in the conviction, that much may be done by simple means for the prevention of human evil, since nine-tenths of the misery, and disease, and crime, that desolates society, is traceable often to no other cause than to the melancholy fact, that so many of our fellow-creatures have never learned from infancy to enjoy the happiness, and appreciate the comforts, of a home! Much is said, now-a-days, of the evil effects of intemperance; and far be it from me to wish to extenuate here its frightful progeny of crime; still, I hold, that to look upon intemperance as the primary cause of all the evil that follows in its train, is to take by far too contracted a view of the subject; for, on the one hand, sobriety, in the absence of other acquired habits, will not always of itself increase the comforts of home; while, on the other, the want of these comforts must ever necessarily lead in time to habits of intemperance. Once we have so far secured the domestic comforts of a family, and accustomed its parents and its children to delight in, and to venerate, the sanctuary of home, we shall have cut up by the root an immensity of human evil; nay, we shall have paved the way for better things, when we find that individuals so trained from their earliest years will learn in time to look without jealousy beyond their own humble but happy sphere, and gradually to appreciate all that is beautiful, and virtuous, and good, under heaven."

In a speech which followed from Mr Fletcher of Dunans, full of the most benevolent sentiment, he took occasion to refer to a meeting in the same hall two years ago, to do honour to one (Charles Dickens, Esq.) to whom the poor man owes a deep debt of gratitude; "one who has revealed to us the sacred virtues and affections that, despite of rage and wretchedness, dwell in the hovels of the very poor." And let us linger in this place for an instant, says this distinguished writer, "to remark, that if ever household affections are graceful things, they are graceful in the poor. The ties that bind the wealthy and the proud to home may be forged on earth; but those which link the poor man to his humble hearth are of the true metal, and bear the stamp of heaven. The man of high descent may love the halls and lands of his inheritance, as a part of himself, as trophies of his birth and power; his associations with them are associations of wealth, and pride, and triumph; the poor man's attachment to the tenement he holds, which strangers have held before, and may tomorrow occupy again, has a worthier root, struck deep into a purer soil. His household gods are of flesh and blood, with no alloy of silver, gold, or precious stones; he has no property but in the affections of his own heart; and when they endear bare floors and walls, despite of rags, and toil, and scanty meals, that man has his love of home from God, and his rude hut becomes a solemn place. Oh, if those who rule the destinies of nations would but remember this! if they would but think how hard it is for the very poor to have engendered in their hearts that love of home from which all domestic virtues spring, when they live in dense and squalid masses, where social decency is lost, or rather never found! if they would but turn aside from the great thoroughfares and great houses, and strive to improve the wretched dwellings in bye-ways, where only poverty may walk, many low roofs would point more truly to the sky, than the loftiest steeple that now rears proudly up from the midst of guilt and crime, and horrible disease, to mock them by its contrast. In hollow voices from workhouse, hospital, and jail, this truth is preached from day to day, and has been proclaimed for years. It is no light matter, no outcry from the working vulgar, no mere question of the people's health which may be whistled down on Wednesday nights. In love of home, the love of country has its rise; and who are truer patriots, or the best in time of need—those who venerate the land, owning its wood, and stream, and earth, and all that they produce? or those who love their country, boasting not a foot of land in all its wide domain? I feel (continued Mr Fletcher) that I cannot more appropriately conclude these remarks than with this splendid passage. Associated in the spirit of an enlarged and catholic charity, I trust we shall continue to labour together in this good work, not mindful of the differences that divide or disturb, but of the resemblances that unite us as sons of the same soil, worshippers of the same God, pilgrims toiling onwards to the same goal, and looking forward in humility of spirit to the enjoyment of the same glorious and imperishable inheritance."

Let us here add an exhortation to individual efforts for benevolent objects. Let no one be balked by the reflection, that his means are trifling, and can do little or nothing. Even unconnected with a single fellow-creature, it is amazing how much one person may be enabled to do in his little circle, if he acts with a reasonable degree of energy. But it is generally found possible for an individual to gather some force around him, and to act with the authority and means of numbers, by getting up an association and taking an active part in it, however subordinate his apparent office. The fact is, there is a very large number of persons who are willing to contribute in some way to philanthropic objects, and only require to have shape and direction given to their powers of doing good. Hence it is that we so often hear of societies of name and character, the origin of which is traced to some comparatively obscure person, who was perhaps its first secretary, and who had all along unnoticed taken the chief share of its labours upon himself. Even, however, where such operations may not be prac-

ticable, let every one at least enter heartily upon his own special duty of doing what in him lies to succour, console, correct, and guide, and we have no doubt of the results being great.

APPLICATION OF CHEMISTRY TO AGRICULTURE.

EARLY in January last a meeting of landed gentlemen and farmers took place in Edinburgh, with the view of forming an association for the application of chemistry to agriculture; and as the intelligence of such a scheme may not have reached our readers in the south, we offer the following notice of it from the *Edinburgh Courier* newspaper:—

"The great and leading object of the association is to have a chemist of first-rate eminence, resident in Edinburgh, who, during the winter months, shall devote himself to analysing such soils, manures, and other substances as may be sent him by farmers, and giving them advice regarding their value and usefulness. In summer he will visit different districts of the country, at the request of members of the association, and give a few lectures in the towns, or advice to individuals, regarding the system of management best suited to different soils. It is easy to see that all this will be attended with very great practical benefits to the country.

We are aware, however, that there are persons who have a distrust of the aid to be had from chemistry in the delicate and refined processes of agriculture; and to them we would address a few words.

Now, the more reconduce principles of vegetation are subjects on which neither chemist nor farmer will require to touch. Indeed, there will be no call made on the farmer, or persons wishing the analysis, for any chemical knowledge. They are to submit limestones, bone-dust, guano, and manures of all kinds, marls, decaying rocks, and such like substances, to the chemist, and he is to pronounce on their value, and to point out their utility in reference to different soils, and for raising different crops. He will say, for example, whether the guano has been robbed of its ammonia, or the bone-dust of its gelatin, or whether the limestone be coloured with bituminous matter which will disappear with burning, or with iron which will not; and then he will be able to say what price the article ought to bear, and with what crops, on what soils, and at what periods it ought to be used. On the part of the person who sends the substance for analysis, it is plain that no knowledge of chemistry is required; and even the chemist will not find his duty an arduous one. A few chemical tests, and an accurate balance, will be nearly all that he will require; and he will have no occasion to approach those nice and subtle operations of nature, over which there certainly hangs a delicate and almost impenetrable veil. With the changes of the sap in its progress from wood to starch, and from starch to sugar, processes abundantly subtle, seeing that all these matters are identical in composition, or what is termed isomerie, he will have no concern. His office will be much the same as the chemist's mentioned by Mr Bakewell in his *Geology*, who some years ago analysed a substance which the miners in Derbyshire had been throwing aside, ever since the days of the emperor Adrian, as useless dross, and which he found to be a valuable ore of lead, and not the worthless sulphate of barytes which they had supposed it to be. And, perhaps, in our chemist's hands, some marls and limestones may share a similar fate.

But the summer duties of the chemist will be even more important than the analyses, which are to occupy his winter hours. During that season he will impart information on many of the more recent discoveries and improvements in practical agriculture; and already enough has been done to admit of his giving much valuable and curious information, whether in the form of lectures, or by communicating with individuals. For example, the good effects of bone-dust, and of the phosphates generally on peaty soils—of saline compounds for crops of hay on loams in trap districts—and of lime on granitic soils—may be mentioned, and they admit of explanation. They are noticed here as a proof of the advancement already made in this kind of knowledge. But much yet remains to be done; and besides giving information, it will be his duty no less to suggest experiments. He will give instructions to farmers to make trial of substances, the composition of which is known and determinate, on different soils, and with a variety of crops, accurately noting the weight of the produce, both in its dry and moist state. And who does not see that such trials, made on a diversity of soils (for in this respect the experiments will have the advantage over any which the chemist could make himself on an experimental farm), will furnish him with results from which he may possibly draw some general principle. This, again, may point the way to other trials and new discoveries, and so on without limit.

Need we say what will be the benefits of all this training and experiment? In the first place, there will be a gain to the country at large in the increased productiveness of the land; and in this there will be the first to share who first know of the new methods that will give them crops at a lower cost than their neighbours. And, in the second place, a spirit of intelligence and inquiry cannot fail to be diffused among our farmers; of which it will be difficult to estimate the value. Instead of blindly following in the old courses, they will have a pleasure in devising new ones, and will gradually raise themselves in the scale of being. And if it be true that even the mechanical arts will fall off, as De Tocqueville has admirably shown, if their principles are lost sight of, just as copies taken from copies decline at last from the original, much more will the fields of the farmer, changing in their composition with every crop that is taken from them, reward now at last but the intelligent and the skilful.

In conclusion, we wish the association all success, and confidently believe, that no one properly alive to his country's interest, will grudge the yearly pittance necessary to give it stability and usefulness."

* Report of a Meeting, &c. Montagu, Edinburgh; C. Dolman, 61 New Bond Street, London; and R. Coyne, Capel Street, Dublin: 1842. The appendix of the work embraces a variety of useful information on available means for ameliorating the condition of the humbler classes, collected from the Sanitary Reports and other sources.

CHINESE EDUCATION AND LITERATURE.

[From "Ten Thousand Things relating to China and the Chinese," an exceedingly interesting work, descriptive of the objects in the Chinese collection in London.]

THE education and literature of the "Celestial Empire" form, beyond comparison, the most interesting and instructive point of view in which the Chinese can be contemplated. We cannot, indeed, praise the kind of education practised in China. The studies are confined to one unvaried routine, and to deviate in the smallest degree from the prescribed track would be regarded as something worse than mere eccentricity. Science, properly speaking, is not cultivated at all. There is no advancement, no thirsting after fresh achievements of knowledge, no bold and prying investigations into the mysteries of nature. Chemistry, physiology, astronomy, and natural philosophy, are therefore at a low ebb. The instruction given in their schools is almost wholly of a moral and political complexion, being designed solely to teach the subjects of the empire their duties. Within the allotted circle all are educated, all must be educated. According to Mr Davis, a statute was in existence two thousand years ago, which required that every town and village, down even to a few families, should have a common school; and one work, of a date anterior to the Christian era, speaks of the "ancient system of instruction."

A remarkable passage from the closing part of an address of the ancient chieftain Shun to his successor Yu, found in the Shoo-king, or Book of Records, may not only show the pure system of instruction at that early day, but prove also the antiquity of its author:—"From the mouth come peace and war. Peace is mild, but war is destructive; from the words of the mouth, then, are these two diverse effects. How greatly ought such springs of evil and of good to be feared!"

These words must have been uttered more than four thousand years ago. They remind us forcibly of the inspired penman, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing."

There are annual examinations in the provinces, and triennial examinations at Peking, which are resorted to by throngs of ambitious students. The whole empire is a university, a mighty laboratory of scholars. The happy men who pass successfully through the several necessary ordeals are honoured with distinctions. They are feasted at the expense of the nation; their names and victories are published throughout the empire; they are courted and caressed; and they become, *ipso facto*, eligible to all the offices within the gift of the sovereign. The most learned are appointed to the highest degree of literary rank, the "Han-lin" or membership of the national college. All this means that the emperor may "pluck out the true talent" of the land, and employ it in the administration of his government. The fourteen thousand civil mandarins are, almost without exception, the *beaux esprits*—the best scholars of the realm.

The highest literary graduate is entitled to wear a white stone brought from India, called "Chay how," on the cap, as a distinguishing mark. The success of a literary examination is by them termed "plucking a branch of the fragrant olive," denoting the attainment of the rank of "Kou-jin," because that flower is in blossom in autumn, when the examination occurs. Educated talent here enjoys its just consideration. All other titles to respect, all other qualifications for office, are held as naught, compared with this. This, undoubtedly, in connexion with the rigid enforcement of the doctrine of responsibility, is the true secret of the greatness and prosperity, the stability and repose, of the Celestial Empire. For, as Dr Milne truly remarks, they are the ambitious who generally overturn governments; but in China there is a road open to the ambitious, without the dreadful alternative of revolutionizing the country. It is merely required of a man that he should give some proof of the possession of superior abilities; certainly not an unreasonable requisition.

In education, the Chinese glory is the inculcation of social and political duties. Their teaching is chiefly by authority. Hence the great use made of maxims. These are suspended upon the walls of every apartment, where they are constantly seen and read from early childhood to decrepit age. They say, "Good sayings are like pearls strung together: inscribe them on the walls of your dwelling, and regard them night and day as wholesome admonitions."

The Chinese are a reading people, and the number of their published works is very considerable. In the departments of morals, history, biography, the drama, poetry, and romance, there is no lack of writings, "such as they are." The Chinese *Materia Medica* of Le-shé-chéi comprises forty octavo volumes. Of statistical works, the number is also very large. Their novels are said to be, many of them, excellent pictures of the national manners. The plot is often complex, the incidents natural, and the characters well sustained. The writings of the Chinese are exceedingly numerous, and the variety of style is very great. From the days of Confucius down to our own times, during a period of more than twenty-three hundred years, there has been one uninterrupted series of authors.

The five classics and four books, taken collectively, are somewhat less copious than the Old and New Testaments, with which, however, they are not to be compared, either in diversity and beauty of composition, or in purity and elevation of sentiment.

Still, the precepts given, the duties inculcated, and the prohibitions made, are remarkable, and have elicited inquiry whence writings of so salutary a character for the moral government of this people should have originally emanated.

China has had, too, her Augustan age of poetry. But neither poetry nor prose has assumed precisely the same forms as among the Greeks and Romans. It is remarkable that this brilliant epoch in Chinese letters was during the eighth century of our era, when almost the whole of Europe was sunk in gross ignorance and barbarism. We subjoin a single specimen of Chinese poetry, in a touching little piece, published in the second volume of the "Royal Asiatic Transactions," and written 3000 years ago. Besides the pleasure its intrinsic beauty will afford, it offers a convincing proof of the substantial identity of human feelings in all times and countries. The piece bemoans the fate of a maiden, betrothed to a humbler rival, but compelled to become the bride of a rich and powerful suitor:—

The nest yon winged artist builds,
Some robber bird shall tear away;
So yields her hopes the affianced maid,
Some wealthy lord's reluctant prey.
The fluttering bird prepares a home,
In which the spoiler soon shall dwell;
Forth goes the weeping bride, constrained;
A hundred cars the triumph swell.
Mourn for the tiny architect;
A stronger bird hath ta'en its nest;
Mourn for the hapless, stolen bride;
How vain the pomp to soothe her breast!

THE LATE SHIPWRECKS.—(JANUARY 1843).

The terrific loss of life which attended the late gales has created a general wish that some more efficient method may be adopted in the "life-boat service." The average loss of life on the English coast alone in one year, has been set down at 1200 individuals, and within a short period a frightful catalogue of human suffering has been presented. The fate of the President, the Governor Fenner, the City of Bristol, the Reliance, the Conqueror, the Jesse Logan, the Abercrombie Robinson, and the Waterloo, are fresh in everybody's mind; and the impression exists, that some improvement in the life-boats might at least be tried with advantage. The case of the William Brown, when sixteen persons were thrown over to lighten the boat, is one that is cited above all others as illustrating the present deficiency. The life-boats now in use are considered to be heavy and unwieldy, expensive in construction, and not invariably secure. Hence attention has been drawn to an invention called the "Pneumatic Apparatus," the object of which is to make every boat a life-boat in cases of emergency. The scheme has, it is understood, been laid before the government already, and it seems to have been spoken of favourably by scientific judges. Of course, the mention of this apparatus in these columns is not to be considered as any recommendation of its adoption. The details of the plan must be left for the opinion of those who are practically versed in such matters; but a scheme for reducing so fearful a loss of human life is of some public interest, that it is at least worth advertising to.—*Times*.

[We present this paragraph for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact, that even with the present life-boats a very large proportion of the above 1200 lives might have been saved, provided only that *safety-capes* had been employed. As wrecks take place generally within a short distance of the shore, it seems to us very surprising that persons going to sea do not provide themselves with a trifling piece of dress, which may be bought at the cost of a few shillings, and by using which in the hour of danger, they would be tranquilly floated to dry land. That, at all events, the men who are perilled in life-boats should not employ such exceedingly simple preservatives on their persons, is little short of a disgrace to those having the command of these vessels. As we formerly alluded to the safety-cape, nothing more need be said of it here; those who wish a lengthened explanation of its nature and appearance are referred to the article "Resources of Humanity," No. 91 of "Chambers's Information for the People."]

A POPULAR SUPERSTITION.

The lower orders of people in some parts of England have curious superstitions respecting the bee. A poor old widow once complained to me that all her stocks of bees had died, and on inquiring the cause, she informed me that on the death of her husband a short time before, she had neglected to *tap* at each of the hives, to inform the bees of the circumstance; that, in consequence of this omission, they had been gradually getting weaker and weaker, and that now she had not one left. This may be supposed to have been a solitary instance of superstition, but such is by no means the case; and I believe it will be found that very generally, on the death of a cottager who has kept bees, some ceremonious observance takes place. Mr Loudon mentions that when he was in Bedfordshire, he was informed of an old man who sang a psalm in front of some hives which were not doing well, but which he said would thrive in consequence of that ceremony. This may be a local or individual superstition, but the announcement to the bees of the death of the owner is certainly a more general one. A correspondent of Mr Loudon's mentions, that in Norfolk, at places where bees are kept, it is an indispensable ceremony, in case of the death of any of the family, to put the bees in mourning, or the consequence would be that all of them would die. The person who made the assertion mentioned a case in point, where, from the neglect of the custom, every bee in the apiary had perished. The method of putting them in mourning is by attaching a piece of black cloth to each of the hives. Another correspondent also says, that in the neighbourhood of Coventry, in the

event of the death of any of the family, it is considered necessary to inform the bees of the circumstance, otherwise they will dwindle and die. The manner of communicating the intelligence to the little community, is, with due form and ceremony, to take the key of the house, and knock with it three times against the hive, informing the inmates, at the same time, that their master or mistress, as the case may be, is dead. A similar custom prevails in Kent, and in some places it is considered expedient to communicate any great event that may take place to these industrious insects.—*Jesse's Gleanings in Natural History*.

WAR.

Upon what frivolous pretexts have some of the most sanguinary wars been engaged in! Elizabeth of Bohemia (eldest daughter of James I.) advised her husband Frederick, the Elector Palatine, to accept the contested crown of Bohemia. This ill-judged advice on the part of a woman, whose amiability and conscientiousness were well-known, was the principal cause of the thirty years' war. Could she have foreseen the consequences of her advice; could she have looked into futurity, and beheld the torrents of human blood poured forth as water, the millions of lives sacrificed, the desolation of her people, the flames of her palace, and herself wandering, a beggar, from city to city, she must have died with horror on the spot. Thus do men—who can do nothing but by union, who can be happy only by peace—madly arm themselves for their misery, and fight for the accomplishment of their ruin; and when the din of war is ended, they behold the earth lying in desolation, the arts buried, and their real power annihilated.

The following is a list of the wars that have taken place between England and France—those two kingdoms alone:—

1141	-	1 Year.	1549	-	1 Year.
1161	-	25 —	1557	-	2 —
1191	-	15 —	1627	-	2 —
1224	-	9 —	1666	-	1 —
1294	-	5 —	1689	-	10 —
1339	-	21 —	1702	-	11 —
1368	-	52 —	1744	-	4 —
1422	-	49 —	1756	-	7 —
1492	-	1 Month.	1776	-	7 —
1512	-	2 Years.	1793	-	9 —
1521	-	6 —	1803	-	11 —

And, lastly, in 1815, when this calculation was made, 14 years; making, within a period of 700 years, 266 of desolating wars, and the loss of millions of lives.—*Newspaper paragraph*.

HOW TO FIND OUT THE ENGLISH IN GERMANY.

An American gentleman gave us a curious example of German slowness, and in fact introduced himself to us on the occurrence of it. We were embarking on the Danube at Linz, for Vienna. The steamer had not been able to get up to Linz from the lowness of the water. It lay at the distance of twenty English miles further down, and we must be conveyed thither in a common Danube boat. The company had known this fact for three days, yet, till the very morning, not a stroke had been struck in order to put this boat in a fitting condition to carry down at least a hundred people, of all ranks, and in very wet weather. It had neither a cover from the rain nor a seat to sit upon. These had to be hurried up at the last hour. As we went on board, they were still busy putting down the seats. On the plank down which the passengers had to descend into the boat, moreover, stood up, a couple of inches, a stout tennypenny-nail. This nail caught the skirts of every lady that went down, tore several of them, and over it several gentlemen stumbled. The American was standing to see how long it would be before any one would conceive the idea that this nail must be knocked down. He said, he expected if they were all Germans, from what he had seen of them from a year's residence among them, it would go on to the very end of the chapter. And, in truth, so it appeared probable. One after another caught on the nail. Gown after gown went crash; but they were lifted off again, and the parties went forward. Gentlemen stumbled against the nail, and cursed it, and went on. At length Mrs Howitt's gown caught: I disengaged it, and called to a man to bring his hammer and knock it down. Though I said this in German, the American soon after came to me, and said, "Sir, excuse my freedom, but I know you are an Englishman." I asked him how he discovered that. He replied, "By the very simple fact of your having immediately ordered the driving down of that nail." And he then related what I have stated above.—*Howitt's Rural and Domestic Life of Germany*.

FROSTED POTATOES.

Potatoes, when slightly frosted, so as to acquire a sweet taste only, often like an animal body suddenly infested by some disorder which it throws off by perspiration, are found quite wet, throwing out the frost by a kind of sweating. When they are in this state, in order to recover them, and bring them to a proper taste, the whole quantity infected should be turned over, and a quantity of mill seeds thrown among them as they are moved; this both extracts and absorbs the infused moisture from the body of the potatoes infected. But there is a still more powerful remedy than simply mixing them with mill seeds; and that is a small quantity of slaked lime, perfectly dry, mixed amongst the seeds to be used, which has a wonderful effect in recovering potatoes that have been considerably injured by frost. When frosted potatoes are to be used at the table, a way of removing frost is to strip off their skins, and if large, to cut them into two or more pieces; then throw them into cold water for a considerable time, with a handful of salt, and when put on to be boiled, put as much salt in the water as will render them palatable when done. This is a powerful way of making the potato throw off the bad taste and spoiled quality lodged in its substance.—*Newspaper paragraph*.

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